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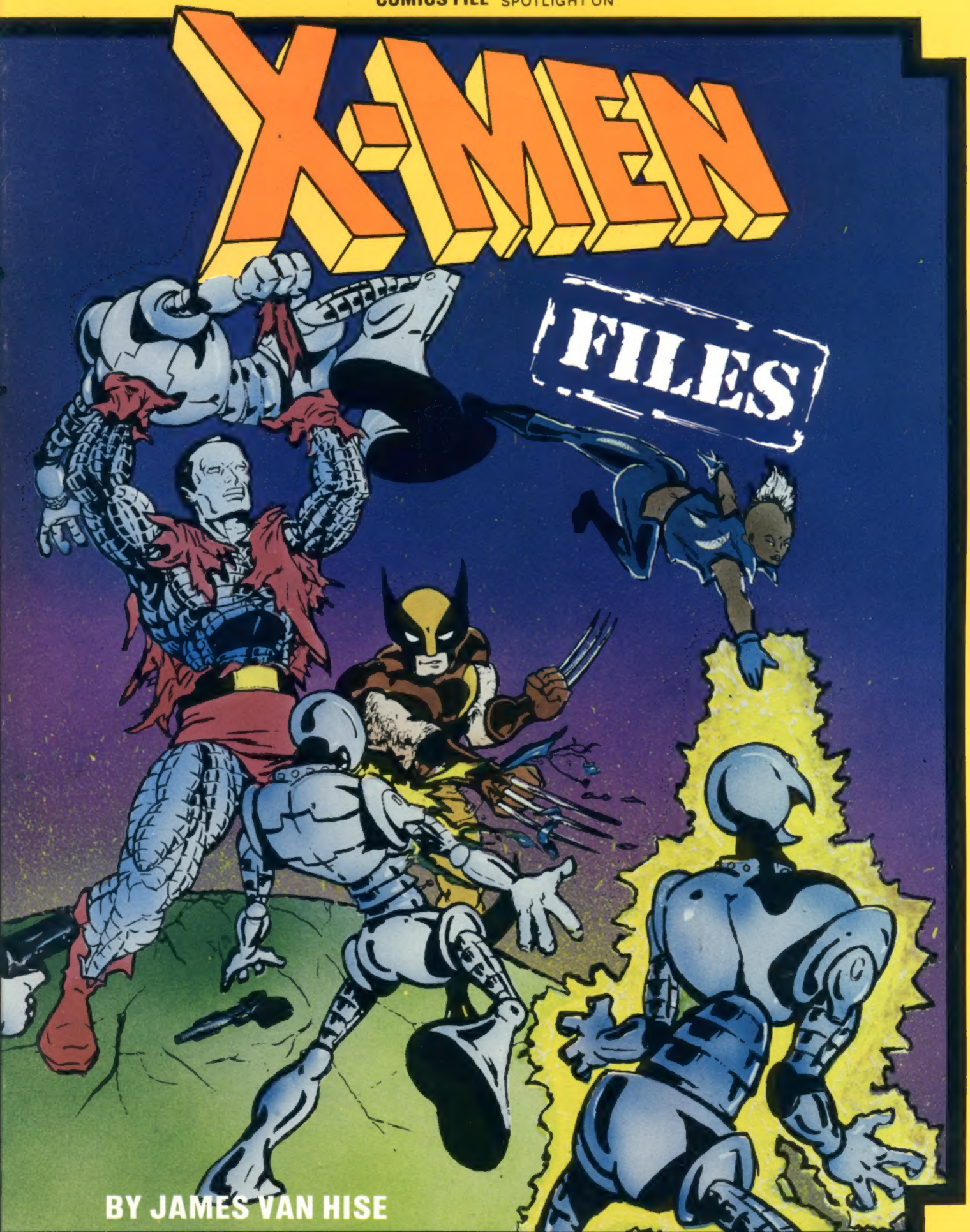

BY JAMES VAN HISE

COMICS FILE MAGAZINE
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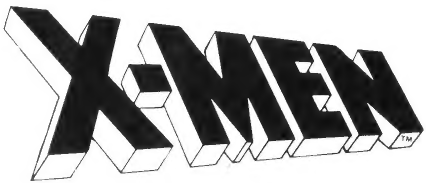

FILES

FILES SERIES EDITED BY HAL SCHUSTER

COMICS FILE MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT ON

X-MEN™ FILES

BY JAMES VAN HISE

COMICS FILE NUMBER ONE

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COMICS FILE MAGAZINE is published to provide a historical record of that phase of American popular culture known as comic books. If this book helps to preserve the record of the many accomplishments of the talented creators working in that field, for whatever company, then it will have admirably served the purpose for which it was created.

Dedicated to preserving the historical record of the four color printed branch of the tree of popular culture and to those myriad talents that so labored to fertilize that tree that it would bear many beautiful blossoms.

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Introduction

Vienna was respected universally as a cultural center of mankind; Berlin experienced new peeks in scientific and other artistic endeavors. This was indeed civilization at its best, growing and exploring in new directions, free to new ideas and ways of thought. Differences in belief or religion were less important to status in the community than the natural ability to grasp concepts and manipulate logical constructs developed through the filter of a liberal education.

And then it happened. It seemed almost as if the world had turned upside down. Hitler ruled Berlin and through it both Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire. Naziism, a new and highly malignant form of ideology was firmly in control of men's minds and disagreement was punishable by death. The ultimate crime was to be different; to be apart from your fellows in any way. Religion was used as an ultimate divider to separate those who would be allowed to be a part of the new order and those who were to be quickly and ruthlessly exterminated. Yes, other forms of division were also used but none were so important in their impact. The new society that arose was almost willing to commit suicide rather than allow diversity of religion. It cast out the scientists it most needed to survive and prosper because they followed the wrong god, suffering severe consequences rather than allow an exception.

Fear rode the night winds and stalked the streets in broad daylight. The fear of jackboots strode the corridors of both universities and places of culture. Those in control were just as afraid as those they ruled. They feared that they could be replaced in turn by a new power.

The Jews who tried to escape the death camps turned to the world for salvation. And received little support, even from the giant democracies of Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. While a few exceptions arose in the most unexpected of places, such as when the Nazis ordered conquered Denmark to force its Jews to tatoo themselves with the Star of David—and the next day, everyone from the king on down sported a fresh painted star. Or when the dictators of Spain and Italy defied their ally by not turning over their Jewish populations. But these were the exceptions, the oddities. Most conquered peoples were only too happy to cooperate in the slaughter and the so-called free nations did nothing. Boatloads of Jewish refugees haltingly overcame tragic obstacles to make their way to the ports of Palestine, only to be turned away by British soldiers denying them access to the Promised Land. No where was a friend to be found to speak out on behalf of the underdog and before the decade was over six million would be exterminated in death camps. Virtually the entire religion would be erased from the nations of Eastern Europe.

Fifteen years after the Holocaust the image was still fresh in some minds. Jack Kirby had grown up in the streets of Brooklyn. Stanley Leiber and Martin Goodman knew the stories well. And when they cast about for a strong and forceful image to put upon the printed page, this entered their minds. The new hated race must be different in some way. In some vague sort of method they must even be threatening. Most of all they must be fairly easily detectable. The basis of the hatred they were to face was easy enough to create, they were different. And that had already proven to be quite enough in the real world.

Thus were born the X-Men, members of a new race, Homo Superior, mutants. Outcasts in a sea of normal humans, hated when their differences were discovered, they would band together to help their own. Knowing that they could never really expect to be fully understood by any but their own kind, fully aware that in a crisis they could only rely on their own, their motivation was strong. Professor X was to be a catalyst. He would teach the mutants to control their special abilities and gather them in a force that would fight so strongly for what was right that mankind must recognize their value. Or so he hoped. He had never stood in a death camp.

Another group of mutants formed around Magneto. His beliefs were different. He had indeed faced the Holocaust and watched his entire family perish about him as they fell victim to the overlords of the concentration camps. His belief was that only in strength lie safety. His experience led to the creation of a force of mutants that would become so strong as to force humanity to allow each member their freedom and comfort. His way was militant and to mankind he would appear the villain, yes, but in his own mind what he did was necessary. Despite their nom-de-plume of The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, which he adopted as a jest on how he was certain mankind saw all mutants, he was never evil and certainly never the villain of the piece. Magneto saw himself as a survivor doing what he was required to do never to see his people again fall under the jackboot.

It was inevitable that the two different forces—the X-Men of the idealistic Professor X and the Brotherhood of the realist Magneto—would collide forcefully. And they did, time and again. Both sides were composed of outcasts who had been tormented, even hunted, by their fellows

merely for being different. Both sides were convinced that their way was right, even necessary. Perhaps Professor X was further motivated in his seeming-idealism by the realization that the number of mutants was small and that if they awoke the ire of humanity they would suffer destruction. Professor X may well have seen his safety, and the safety of his people, as lying through assimilation. Magneto had witnessed that method fail as professors and military heroes, scientists and financiers, musicians and artists, were all turned into the death camps and slaughtered. Magneto believed in strength and survival through unity.

This was the undercurrent that Martin Goodman, Stan Lee (aka Leiber) and Jack Kirby built into their creation. They drew upon the reality they knew so well to create a fantasy in which that reality could be confronted, and perhaps finally laid to rest. Further developments in their work, such as the creation of the Sentinels, furthered that goal.

When the new X-Men team was formed, this time gathered from many nations of the world, the essence was the same. The Nightcrawler was hunted as a demon in his own land and the others suffered to one degree or another, as well all were again outcasts, not accepted as normal by their fellow humans. As time went on, Len Wein continued the tales with a feel similar to that originally developed by Stan Lee. Then Chris Claremont developed the theme with a vengeance! Gradually the forces of racism and terror begin to gather in power in both official and unofficial circles. In Government, senators and bureaucrats ally themselves to create anti-mutant police forces. A vision of future terror is created which projects the deaths of all of the X-Men, terribly, at the hands of a government gone mad with hatred and terror and enraged mobs. Many new organizations are created or taken over by mutants in a desperate hope of survival, of averting that future. One group of mutants, following an odd plan, even organizes to advertise against their own kind and pretend to be a mutant control and elimination force. Things become stranger and stranger. Fear stalks the halls of mutantkind. Humans have caught a glimpse of what they view to be a fearsome foe. After all, isn't it normal for favorable mutations to replace their forebears, the normal populace. People don't want to view themselves as obsolete and doomed. They wonder how intelligent Cromagnon and Neanderthal would have viewed each other.

Mutant forces continue to battle each other because Magneto continues to gather a force that can keep his people safe while Professor X still believes that the answer lies in gaining the acceptance of their fellow man. Professor X seems convinced that normal humankind can be convinced that mutants will not replace them but that the two can co-exist in harmony. The forces of Magneto and the X-Men of Professor X continue to meet and clash. Then in the midst of battle, as Magneto is about to slaughter the innocent, young Jewess Kitty Pryde, he suddenly seems to draw back. He wonders how his path to safety has led to his threatening the life of one of those that he had watched die in the very death camps that had led to his course in life. This shock proves enough to force a re-evaluation of his entire course.

Professor X, ever the idealist, decides to abandon mutantkind completely and escape the dangers of the Earth by joining his lover in travelling the cosmos as part of the Star Jammers. Before he leaves, he convinces a confused Magneto to give his way a chance. Magneto agrees to attempt the path of peace with humankind and agrees to lead the X-Men.

A trial is held in which Magneto is cleared of his past crimes against humanity and the way is clear for him to seek a new future, even if some will not allow him this chance. This becomes one of the reasons for forming X-Factor, the original X-Men refuse to trust this former leader of opposition mutants. Instead of becoming a part of Magneto's X-Men they choose the odd path of publicly calling for the destruction of mutants.

And this is where the troubled world of the mutants stands today. It continues to mirror the realities of the non-comic book world in which we live, as do the writers and artists of these tales. There are assimilationists that believe in merging with the larger mankind as the path to salvation just as there was the American Jewish Committee and its cries against the creation of the Jewish nation of Israel. They reasoned that they were no different from their Christian brothers and thus deserved no separate state. In reality there are those that believe in creating a strongly militant force and those that want to separate themselves entirely to avoid persecution. These too are mirrored in the mutant world of Marvel comics. Indeed in the creation of the mutant universe, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby wrought far more than they originally hoped for or than sales of the first half-score years indicated. They have woven an incredible fantasy indeed, and those creators who followed spun it in grandiose and excellent form.

HAL SCHUSTER

LEE & KIRBY X-MEN

He had a group, an idea, a story, but he didn't have a name; at least he didn't have a name which the publisher liked.

When Stan Lee conceived the X-Men, it was because he wanted to create a new super team comprised of characters who were born with their abilities, rather than acquiring them through some far-fetched accident. Taking the biological concept of the mutant, something which shows a variation not found in its parents, Stan had come up with a new direction that he had been looking for. He'd even settled on a title for the book: **The Mutants**. The only problem was that then-publisher Martin Goodman thought it was too obscure a word and that the little kids who bought comic books wouldn't understand what it meant. Lee's arguments—that there was a wider audience that he was aiming at while still retaining the interest of the bubblegum brigade'-fell on deaf ears. Examining what a mutant was, he defined it as having something extra. A mutant could be considered as being an extraordinary human, or in commercial comic books shorthand, an X-man.

JACK KIRBY

THE STRANGEST SUPER-HEROES OF ALL!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
1 SEPT IND
the X-MEN
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
IN THE SENSATIONAL FANTASTIC FOUR STYLE!
DON'T MISS THIS FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE!
X-MEN VERSUS MAGNETO EARTH'S MOST POWERFUL SUPER VILLAIN!!
CYCLOPS PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR, SIR!
THE ANGEL REPORTING, SIR!
ICEMAN RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, SIR!
THE BEAST IS HERE, SIR!

This gave the book an air of mystery which probably helped it when it first appeared in the summer of '63, although the fact that it appeared on the stands along with **Avengers 1** and the Fantastic Four annual couldn't have hurt either.

While the first issue was certainly interesting, and the introduction of Magneto (who has been to the X-Men what Dr. Doom has been to the Fantastic Four) made for a great start, what with Kirby's striking costume design, the book just wasn't as different as it seemed. It didn't take too discerning a fan to realize that the characters were offshoots of the F.F. Instead of a flaming teenager, there was an icy one. There was even a homely, super-strong character who used a lot of slang, as well as a super-intelligent group leader.

The original X-Men were clearly the pupils of Prof. X, being taught the ropes at the master's feet!

But fans quickly picked up on something else as well. The X-Men were conceived around late '62, about the time that DC published **My Greatest Adventure 80** which introduced "The Doom Patrol," strange characters (although *not* mutants) who'd been brought together by a mysterious wheelchair-bound genius. The coincidence seemed a little too close, although no more was done or said about that than was said years later when DC introduced The Swamp Thing right after Marvel did the Man-Thing. These things happen.

The first eleven issues of **The X-Men** were drawn by Jack Kirby and other than a nagging reuse of The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants in numbers 4,5,6 and 7, they were an interesting run, climaxing in 10 which introduced Ka-Zar and the Savage Land in a rousing adventure which took place all in one issue. Although Kirby did one more issue, almost anything would seem an anti-climax after everything Kirby came up with in 10.

While the title lasted for years after Kirby left it, it seemed to be searching for itself, never certain which direction to go or what to do with the characters. They moved from one adventure to another with very little impact on them as human beings. There were exceptions, though.

THE ROY THOMAS YEARS

Before Stan Lee left the book as writer with number 20 (when Roy Thomas replaced him), Prof. X's half-brother, Cain Marko (The Juggernaut) was introduced in 12. 14 brought in The Sentinels, the latter being as closely identified with the X-Men as anything anyone else ever did in the series.

By this time the character of the Beast had been altered so that he was an intelligent, eloquent personality rather than a Ben Grimm clone. Thus the original X-Men included Professor X (who was killed off by Thomas in 42 and brought back by him in 65), Cyclops (who fires powerful optic blasts and is little different today than when he was introduced in 1963 when he was called "Slim" Summers, a nickname that was quickly dropped), Iceman (Bobby Drake, who could ice up his body and whose origin appeared in issued 44-46), the Angel (whose sole power is that of flight due to his wings and whose origin appeared in 14), the Beast (Hank McCoy who underwent a metamorphosis in **Amazing Adventures** 11 into a blue-furred character who then went on to become involved with the Avengers and later the Defenders as both Iceman and The Angel), Marvel Girl (Jean Grey, who died in 100 to seemingly be reborn as Phoenix, whose powers dwarfed those she previously had and who then went out of control as Dark Phoenix).

There were other part-time X-Men such as the Mimic who first fought them in 19, and then reformed to join the group in 27-29 until he lost his powers.

Alex Summers (Havok) first turned up in 54 and although he fought alongside the X-Men after learning to control his power, he was never formally a member and turns up only

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF STAN

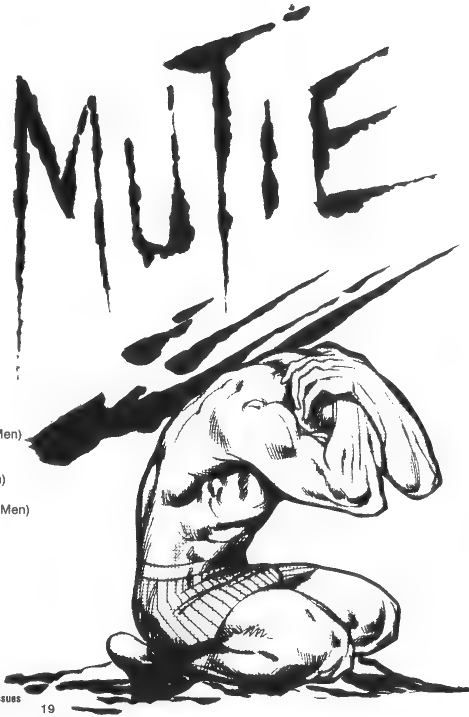
The original X-Men had some interesting high points such as numbers 50 and 51 which were drawn by Jim Steranko, but the most memorable issues were at the end of the original run when Roy Thomas scripted and Neal Adams pencilled numbers 56-63 and 65. Tom Palmer inked, and even when Don Heck did 64 as a fill-in issue, it was drawn to imitate Adams so amazingly that you have to look twice at it to see that it's merely a fine imitation. Those last few issues brought the X-Men together in one gripping story after another which balanced character and plot in a manner more similar to what would be done in the book under Chris Claremont years later. The art is some of Neal Adams' most enervating work and he also plotted 65, which formed a moving climax to the run. (These Adams issues were reprinted by Marvel in a special high quality format available only in comic stores). The run lasted one more issue, but even with the Hulk as a guest star the book seemed dead on its feet after the high energy impact of the Thomas/Adams issues.

Several months later, the title was revived as a reprint book, ostensibly to keep the characters active in some form due to undisclosed plans that Marvel had for them.

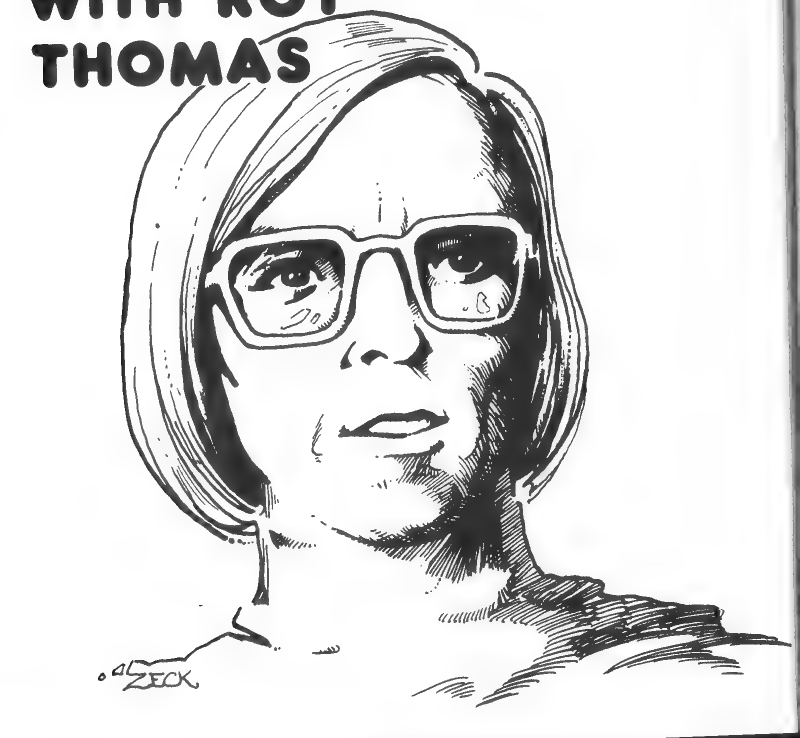
X-Men credits for Roy Thomas.

X-Men 20 — "I, Lucifer" (May 1966)
21 — "From Whence Comes Dominus?"
22 — "Divided, We Fall"
23 — "To Save A City"
24 — "The Plague of the Locust"
25 — "The Power and the Pendant"
26 — "Holocaust"
27 — "Re-Enter: The Mimic"
28 — "The Wail of the Banshee"
29 — "When Titans Clash"
30 — "The Warlock Wakes"
31 — "We Must Destroy the Cobalt Man"
32 — "Beware the Juggernaut, My Son"
33 — "Into the Crimson Cosmos"
34 — "War in a World of Darkness"
35 — "Along Came a Spider"
36 — "Mekano Lives"
37 — "We, the Jury"
38 — "The Sinister Shadow of Doomsday"
"A Man Called X" (Origins of the X-Men)
39 — " The Fateful Finale"
"Lonely Are the Hunted" (Origins of the X-Men)
40 — "The Mark of the Monster"
"The First Evil Mutant" (Origins of the X-Men)
41 — "Now Strikes the Sub-Human"
"The Living Diamond" (Origins of the X-Men)
42 — "If I Should Die" (Death of Prof. X)
"The End, or the Beginning?" (Origins of the X-Men)
43 — "The Torch is Passed"
"Call Him Cyclops" (Origins of the X-Men)
44 — "Red Raven, Red Raven" (with Gary Friedrich)
55 — "The Living Pharaoh"
"Where Angels Dare To Tread" (Origins of the X-Men)
56 — "What is the Power?"
"The Flying A-Bomb" (Origins of the X-Men)
57 — "The Sentinels Live"
58 — "Mission: Murder"
59 — "Do or Die, Baby"
60 — "In the Shadow of Sauron"
61 — "Monsters Also Weep"
62 — "Strangers in a Savage Land"
63 — "War in the World Below"
64 — "The Coming of Sunfire"
66 — "The Mutants and the Monster" (March 1970)

(NOTE: Gary Friedrich, Arnold Drake and other writers are responsible for issues 45-54.)



A TALK WITH ROY THOMAS



Roy Thomas was perhaps the first person to move from organized comics fandom into working inside the comic book industry itself. He's been working in comics as a writer for over twenty years. One of his first jobs came when he joined the staff at Marvel and had the **X-Men** handed to him by Stan Lee.

"Stan called me into his office one day and handed me one of the early jobs that Werner Roth had pencilled, as opposed to having done over Kirby's breakdowns, and he asked me to write it. It was actually my first regular super hero series," Roy recalls. "I'd done a few issues in a row of **Dr. Strange** and about a year of **Sgt. Fury**, but that was really my first regular superhero assignment. Stan was trying to dig out of things and **X-Men** was pretty much at the bottom of the list at that time. It was one of the less popular books and he was kind of tired of writing all these teams. A few months later I inherited **The Avengers** under the same circumstances.

INTERVIEW

X-MEN
12¢
IND.
56
MAY
MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP
WHAT IS...THE
POWER?

"The original plan, which I objected to strenously, was to have Werner Roth plot them and me just dialogue them. I objected strenuously and said that doesn't make sense because Werner was a good artist but he was basically a romance artist who'd done little superhero work on his own and I didn't like the idea of just working with his plot. We tried that for a month or so and it didn't work out very well. So I started plotting the book and it was a so-so seller. It was declining in those days because Jack Kirby had been doing it until a few issues before. Werner was a good artist but his stuff wasn't quite as salable and mine wasn't quite as salable as Stan's."

THE NEAL ADAMS TOUCH

After two years, Roy turned the book over to Gary Friedrich and it passed from him to Arnold Drake but the title remained in a sales decline. Because of this, the stage was set to try something different to see if things could be turned around. Enter Neal Adams, who had recently made a big impact on comics over at DC with Deadman and The Spectre.

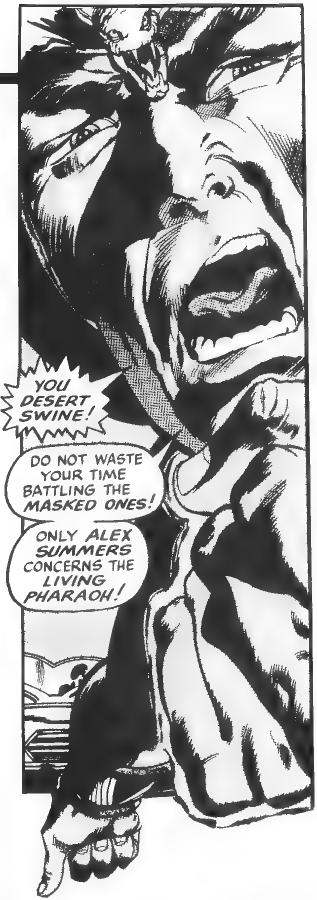
"Neal walked in one day in the late Sixties and he decided that he'd like to do the book," Thomas relates regarding the start of what would be the most memorable period in the history of the **X-Men** since Lee & Kirby had left the book.

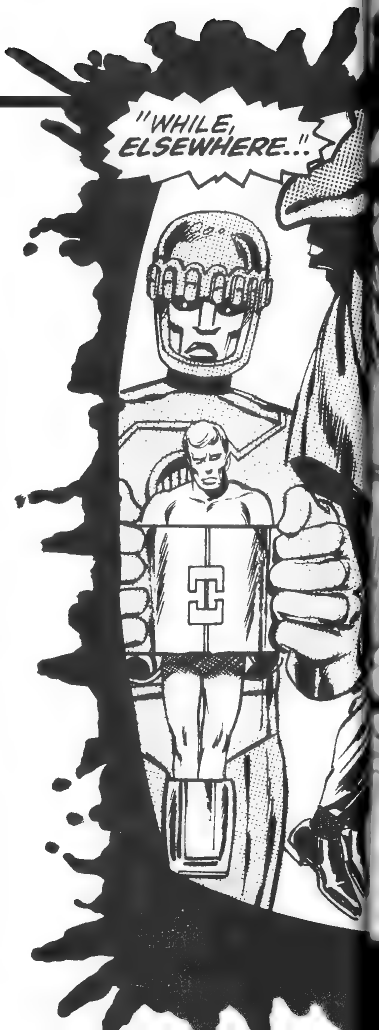
"I had just returned to the book for the second time to try to shore it up a little because we hadn't been that happy with the issues since mine. Stan had asked me to take it over again because mine had done much better. I had done one issue when Neal walked in the door. I was going to let him write and draw it so I was very flattered when Neal asked me to stay on as the writer because he liked my work. I had met Neal a couple times and he was one of the few artists at DC that Stan and myself would have loved to get over at Marvel. So except for deadline problems, which were insuperable, it was a very pleasant experience and I wish that it had continued a lot longer than it did."

Neal Adams drew a total of nine issues of **X-Men**. During the first seven the Angel went through three costume changes.

"That was Neal's idea," Thomas explains. "I didn't like changing it so often but Neal would come in with some new costume and I didn't feel like arguing about it because I didn't feel that it hurt anything. The book was kind of floundering and maybe one of these things would catch on, so I let him go with it. I didn't encourage him and I didn't always like the costumes better. The only thing I had to do with it was a little earlier when Don Heck was on the book and we had purposely decided that the X-Men should no longer be wearing identical costumes (**X-Men** 39) and that was something that caught on after awhile.

"But I felt that it really didn't hurt if Neal wanted to change the costumes. And when pages come in late and they're already pencilled, it's a matter of—is it really worth arguing about? So I just let it go. My feeling is that if you can find an excuse to let an artist do something that he's really enthusiastic about and there's no reason not to do it, why not?"





X-Men 57-59 featured the first revival of the Sentinels, which had originally appeared in **X-Men 14-16**. And it was Thomas and Adams who demonstrated the exciting continuing possibilities inherent in this exciting concept, and Sentinel revivals have continued to produce better than average stories.

"Our use of the Sentinels was just an outgrowth of what Stan and Jack had done at the beginning with the Sentinels created to attack mutants. Neal and I liked that idea very much and we just wanted to carry it out a little further. The Sentinels have always brought out some good work. They were some of the better issues that Stan and Jack did. There's a lot of symbolism there with the androids who are like emotionless policemen—a little like the Gort robot in **The Day The Earth Stood Still.** I was also very pleased with the ending idea I had at that time of the Sentinels being talked into following their own logic and flying into the sun. Even if that wasn't going to get rid of them, it made a good ending story. That was something that I was very pleased with even though I knew that one day we might bring them back, redesign some new ones or whatever.

"The Sentinels have always brought out some good work from the writers and artists in **X-Men.** It gave the opportunity to do something with the McCarthyism type thing from Stan and Jack on. Everybody responded to it and wanted to do their own version. The Sentinels have become a Rorschach test for whatever anybody wanted to do with the X-Men. Chris Claremont has even brought in religious groups and so forth."

This story continued the use of Scott Summers brother, Alex, and developed him into the character of Havok. This entire concept of Scott having a brother was introduced by Thomas upon his return to the **X-Men** in issue 55.

An interesting twist used during this run was when Magneto appeared in issue 62, but the reader was unaware of who the man was because he was not wearing his mask or familiar costume. In fact the mask was not shown until the last panel, thus creating both a surprise ending and a cliffhanger for the story.

"I don't recall exactly how we came up with that—how much of it was Neal and how much of it was me," Thomas explains. "After we'd talk over a general plot, Neal would do a lot of replotting and sometimes when the plot came back there were a lot of elements in it that were not in there when we talked about it. So I haven't the foggiest notion of how much of that was me and how much was him. I know that I was very happy with the way we ended the book, which got a lot of attention at the time."

"UNUS HAS PROVED NOT COMPLETELY UNTOUCHABLE..."
"MASTER-MIND'S ILLUSIONS WERE USE-LESS AGAINST US..."
"...AND THE MONUMENTALLY MASSIVE BLOB WAS MOVED BY ANTI-GRAVITY DEVICES...!"

RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES--?
PROFESSOR, WE SAW YOU COMMITTED TO THE GRAVE!
NOT I... RATHER, A PERSON BRAVE, AND IN THE FINAL ACCOUNTING-- GOOD!

THE RETURN OF PROF. X

Although Thomas didn't script the final issue drawn by Adams (issue 65: "Before I'd Be Slave..."), there was a major story element in it which he was responsible for — the return to the team of Prof. Charles Xavier, who had been considered dead since issue 42.

"We had a long term plan that perhaps Prof. X really was dead, but because we weren't sure whether that was a good idea or not, Stan wanted me to keep it so that it would be fairly easy for me to have him be the Changeling character and bring him back later on. The original impression was that he really was actually dead, but I believe I read the other day that Phoenix's death was irrevocable too and you see what happened with that.

"I wrote all of the issues Neal did except his last one. That particular issue Neal wanted to plot and I said fine and we talked it over for a few minutes. When it came in, because I was busy and I hadn't plotted it, I gave it to Denny O'Neil to write. People always assume somehow that this was Denny's influence on the book when actually, except for the dialogue, he had nothing more to do with the plot than I did, in fact even less.

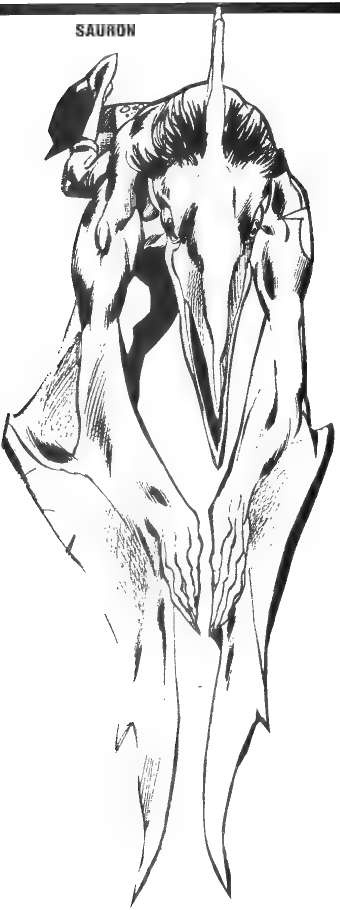
"The interesting thing is that that was one of the two issues Neal did which sold fairly well—strangely enough because it had a Marie Severin cover. It was that one and the one with Ka-Zar on the cover (issue 62) which sold fairly well. It was cancelled soon after. Neal was not as saleable as the quality of his artwork indicated at that period because it was a different market. The one where Don Heck and Tom Palmer did an imitation of Neal's style with the first Sunfire story sold better. Neal's work was perhaps a little too sophisticated and not clear enough for the market we had at that time. But the sales had improved enough over those last issues I mentioned that when Martin Goodman cancelled it he wanted to keep it going as a reprint book for awhile. Then a few years later I had the idea to bring it back in the form which led to what it is now."

THE RETURN OF THE X-MEN''

Thomas had wanted to bring the **X-Men** back a couple of times during its hiatus. His first idea was to try to establish them as a superhero team which didn't need colorful costumes.

"My idea was that those characters were so unique that I thought it would be a good idea to go back to what Stan had tried to do for the first couple issues of **Fantastic Four**, which was to have characters who didn't have to have costumes. When you've got characters like the Beast,

Angel and Ice Man that were so recognizeable anyway, I thought it would be interesting to have these people trying to be secretive without wearing costumes and we did a couple issues of **Marvel Team-Up** that way.



"That was something I was always interested in and in some ways I'm sorry that we didn't try it that way because I would have liked to see a superhero book make it without costumes, but it doesn't seem too likely. Nowadays it seems strange but characters have costumes and go whole issues without wearing them, so in some ways that's come about anyway. I'm plased to see it although I've gone back to where I don't try very hard to get people out of costumes because I've seen so much of it now that it no longer interests me as much as it once did."

But those two issues of **Marvel Team-Up** with Spider-Man and the X-Men didn't arouse much interest at the time. Then one day Stan Lee, Roy Thomas and the former President of the company, Al Landau, were talking and he suggested that if Marvel had a group that featured characters from different countries, it could sell more abroad. Landau had special reasons for wanting to do this since he always made money selling Marvel pages abroad.

"I'd always liked the Blackhawks, which had an international flavor, and I suggested bringing back the X-Men and keeping just two of the original characters, like Cyclops and Marvel Girl," Thomas explains. "Plus we could use Banshee. My idea was to have them wandering around in different countries in a giant ship hidden by clouds. They'd fly over Europe and be looking for mutants. That's about as far as I carried it. My only regret is that in leaving Marvel when I did, I didn't even get credit for being editor of **Giant Size X-Men** 1, which I did commission.

"But it didn't make any difference because it was really what Len Wein and Dave Cockrum, and later what Chris Claremont did that really made the book popular. None of us guessed that the book would be as popular as it was. We were just trying to do something which would sell well in the states and do okay overseas. Instead it became something which took over the whole market in the U.S. too. It was just a lucky accident that grew out of a strange situation—trying to get pages to sell abroad."

Looking back over the new X-Men and the less popular version of the Sixties, Thomas believes he understands why the **X-Men** are more successful now.

"It's really strange, but I think the same thing was happening in that period in comics that was happening in music back in the Fifties. I think that readers got more and more interested in seeing young people their own age and less interested in seeing what featured adults. They became much more interested in seeing people who might share some of their own problems and had more of an excuse for being immature. Superheroes were always sort of immature, what with Ben Grimm slugging everybody and that kind of thing. So that's easier to accept if the people are teenagers or thereabouts and I think that the readership just got more and more interested in people their own age.

KA-ZAR NEEDS NO HELP, X-MAN!
HIS WORD IS LAW IN THE SAVAGE LAND.
AND KA-ZAR WILL DEAL WITH THOSE WHO BREAK HIS LAWS.
THERE'S MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN SOME PRIMEVAL JAY-WALKING, LONGHAIR!
SO, THE BLUDGEONING BEAST IS GIVING YOU AID AND SUCCOR, WHETHER YOU WANT IT OR NOT!!

"Once that got started with the X-Men," Thomas continues, "it became a self-perpetuating situation which led to the new Teen Titans, various permutations of the mutants and eventually to **Power Pack**. I think that kids are just more interested in seeing people more their own age and less interested in seeing adults. Maybe it's fallout from the Sixties, of not trusting anybody over 30."

THE NEW X-MEN

Whatever those plans were, they were kicked around, abandoned and changed until 4½ years later when **Giant Size X-Men** 1 appeared in 1975 (recently reprinted in a special quality edition available in comic shops).

Marvel had come up with the idea that if they could put together a team composed of characters from many nations, they'd have a big hit in the overseas market. Roy Thomas suggested the X-Men as an ideal format for this and the team underwent revisions. Although Prof. X was still the ever-present mentor, it was decided to keep Cyclops in order to have some tie between the new X-Men and the old X-Men. It was also felt that he was the most interesting member of the old team due to his tragic overtones in that he could never look at another human being with his unshielded eyes.

The new X-Men were gathered together by Prof. X in **Giant Size 1**. They consisted of Nightcrawler (who can teleport), and Wolverine (a Canadian who was originally part of what would become known as Alpha Flight but who would quit to become a free agent when Xavier offered him the chance to employ his heightened senses and admantium-plated skeleton).

Storm (an orphan who grew up in the wilds of Kenya, East Africa and who as a child lived as a thief in the streets until maturing into a locally worshipped goddess due to her control of weather), Colossus (aka Peter Rasputin, a Russian who uses his ability to turn his body into something akin to armor plating for international benefit after being convinced by Professor X), Thunderbird (an American Indian, on borrowed time from the start as he was created solely to be killed off in his third outing in **X-Men 95**) and Shadow Cat (aka Ariel, Sprite and Kitty Pryde, the newest and youngest X-Man, who, at only fourteen, is possessed of the ability to phase through solid objects much as the Vision of the Avengers can) round out the team.

Len Wein, who essentially created the new X-Men, was only involved with the title for the first couple of stories,

A NEW BEGINNING

Krakoa—the mutant island caused the new X-team to be brought together to rescue the original one! At left is the cover of that issue.

then left the book. Chris Claremont began writing with **X-Men 94**, the second story of the new X-Men.

The artist on the new X-Men up through issue 107 was Dave Cockrum. His approach to the X-Men was quite different from those of either John Byrne or Paul Smith and his work on the early issues suffers only in comparison to the book later. Len Wein conceived these new X-Men as being teenagers and this is how Cockrum drew them. Claremont later decided their ages should be more varied, but when Cockrum returned to the title for several months beginning with 145, he drew them all like teenagers again which made it all seem very awkward. Whether for this reason or post-Byrne depression, sales slumped until Paul Smith took over the title (a 50,000 copy jump was recorded with his first issue), although Smith left to be replaced by John Romita, Jr.

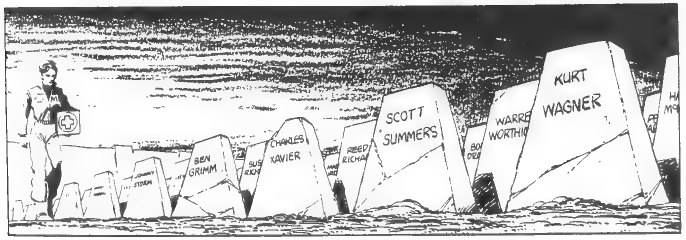
WHEN BYRNE TAKES OVER

Chris Claremont began putting the new X-Men through changes almost from the start, but it was when John Byrne began his long stint on the title (108-143) that the book really came alive as this team meshed the way an artist/writer team should. John Byrne put a lot of his own input into the stories and would become annoyed when something he drew one way would be scripted by Claremont in another way later, which led to occasional creative conflicts. It was over just this sort of frustration, and a refusal by Claremont to give Byrne equal say in the direction the stories would go, that he finally left the title to be writer/artist on the **Fantastic Four**. Byrne took a sort of Canadian version of the X-Men which he'd created in the title, called Alpha Flight, and gave it its own magazine.

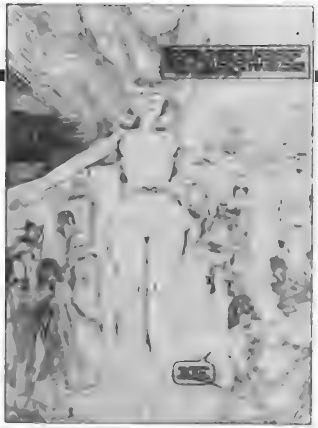
One can only wonder where the book would have gone had Byrne stayed with it as two of his last issues, **X-Men 141** & **142** contained one of the best stories to ever appear in the title. "Days of Future Past" was a time travel tale involving dual, related stories. The Kitty Pryde of years in the future is able to briefly have her mind sent into her past self in order to warn the X-Men so that they can prevent the murder of a presidential candidate which would ultimately mean the end of the world in the future. While the present day X-Men perform their mission, we see the future from which Kitty Pryde briefly escaped, a future where Sentinels

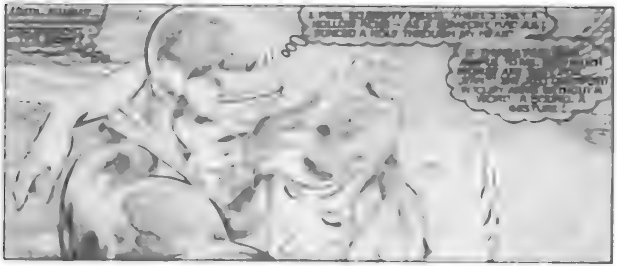
hunt down and capture or destroy any superpowered being, whether mutant or not. One by one we see the murder of all the X-Men we know, those of Storm and Wolverine being the most shocking.

There are many standout stories in the Claremont/Byrne series. Issues 111-117 are especially good, as are the Dark Phoenix stories. This series, which apparently involved Jean Grey's powers warping and twisting her into the insane Dark Phoenix, climaxed in 137 when she seemingly committed suicide in order to prevent Dark Phoenix from ever rising again. But that's not how Chris Claremont planned it.



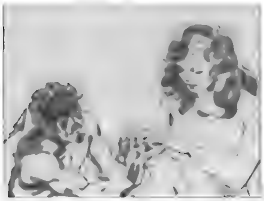
He'd originally written 137 so that Jean Grey was stripped of her powers forever because Dark Phoenix had destroyed a planet of four billion people. But when editor Jim Shooter saw the pencilled pages he rejected them because even though Claremont's editor, Jim Salicrup, had approved the story, Shooter hadn't seen it until it was drawn. Shooter felt that Phoenix was getting off too lightly and should be imprisoned under eternal torture for her acts, even though she was insane at the time she committed them.





Byrne's unused pencils for the X-Men story that never was!

THE ALTERNATE ENDINGS!



These pencils are from the ending original planned for X-Men 138. Instead the graveyard scene at right was run—Scott and Jean were never to have the chance to sort out their fate! These are panels from the un-published ending to X-Men 138. Instead the graveyard scene opposite was used. Scott and Jean were never to have the chance to sort out what had happened to them. Jean had murdered and a plea of temporary insanity wasn't enough in the Marvel Universe!

Rather than do that, Claremont just had her kill herself with an ancient Kree weapon left on the moon in the blue area. Even this was sabotaged by his disputes with John Byrne because he wanted it to be a weapon in the house of The Watcher which exists in that blue area, but when Byrne drew those pages he didn't like that idea and changed it. By this time, Claremont was so depressed over the entire situation that he just let it go, but Byrne's actions could only have hastened the breakup of the team.

IF EVEN ONE MORE PERSON I LOVE DIED AT MY HANDS...
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. QUICK. CLEAN. PAINFUL.
I LOVE YOU, SCOTT!
A PART OF ME WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU...
JEAN... NO. DON'T!
NO!
SCOTT!
JEAN!

DIVERSE HANDS

Paul Smith's vivid and powerful art brought just as much verve to the title as Byrne's very different style did. Whereas inker Bob Wiacek isn't suited to some pencillers, his style meshes perfectly with Smith, just as Austin's brought out every stroke of power in Byrne's pencils. The real test is that reproduction of the Smith/Wiacek art is crisp and clear with no haziness to the art at all, whereas Byrne's inking of his own pencils is consistently plagued by muddy translation to the comic book page.

Under Claremont, **X-Men** has become a much more brutal and realistic title over the past few years. Even the word grim might apply. While in interviews he has talked about pulling back in the other direction, in 170 he pulled a shocker when Storm, who has sworn never to kill, stabs a vicious opponent through the heart. Although she no doubt knew that a mutant was present who would save the woman, the undisguised brutality of the act and the lack of recriminations remains to haunt the reader.

One of the weirdest stories Claremont ever did took place under the Claremont/Smith team when the X-Men encountered bizarre alien beings which Wolverine dubbed "the sleazoids." As with 143, Claremont was once more indulging in an homage to all that H.R.Giger's bizarre work did for **Alien**. It has become the monster cliche of the Eighties, and nowhere is it more present than in Claremont's X-Men. On the plus side, the story these creatures populated was filled with other sorts of wonders which didn't rely on the Sleazoids to strengthen their invention. The most talked about moment in **X-Men 165** is when Kitty Pryde, who loves Peter Rasputin, offers her 14-year-old self to him in an understated scene whose intentions are all too clear. But Peter does have a nice way of saying "This is not the proper time or place."

WHY?! WHEN YOU'RE DOOMED, WHAT'S THE POINT OF PLAYING BY SOCIETY'S STUPID RULES?!
THIS IS NOT THE PROPER TIME OR PLACE.
WE MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER CHANCE!

MAYBE, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVE'TA DO.
LOGAN, FORGIVE ME, BUT I MUST WARN YOU.
YOU NO LONGER HAVE OFFICIAL STATUS OR SPECIAL PRIVILEGES, AS AGENT OR X-MAN. SHOULD YOU STEP OUTSIDE THE LAW, I CANNOT HELP YOU. INDEED, I MAY BE FORCED TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

MORE X-HEROES

Although conceived with the foreign market in mind, the new X-Men have become a sensation everywhere. Guest appearances in other books are guaranteed to boost sales. Wolverine, the controversial and violent member of the team (whose personality seems to be rubbing off on Storm lately), was a hit in his own four issue mini-series drawn by Frank Miller. Old issues are being reprinted. A companion title, **The New Mutants**, was launched (dubbed "the X-Babies" by the X-Men's own Kitty Pryde), and Brent Anderson drew a popular X-Men graphic novel published book size on slick paper. Mary Jo Duffy even wrote an X-Men prose story for Marvel Novel Series 9: **The Marvel Superheroes**, published in 1979.

Whereas in the Sixties **The X-Men** seemed the ugly duckling of the Marvel line, in the Seventies and Eighties they've matured into the consistently enduring hit of the Marvel Age.

Old issues are being reprinted in expanded second editions slated to continue indefinitely.

The New Mutants, which seemed to have such an inauspicious start, has become quite popular and produced a brilliant special written by Chris Claremont and drawn by exciting newcomer Art Adams (who also drew **X-Men Annual 9**).

"Anything worth doing is worth doing to excess."
Oscar Wilde

The **X-Men** itself passed the 200 mark and the run has had interesting diversions with occasional issues drawn by Barry Smith, who has matured into quite a talent since his Conan days of fifteen years ago.

Even the original **X-Men** have reteamed under the code name **X-Factor**, although Scott Summers has proven to be something of a moral coward as he refused to deal honestly with the difficult personal life he has now that he is married but Jean Grey is back—the "Jean Grey" who died previously proving not to be her at all.

People may complain that there are too many mutant books out there, but I still remember when there was only one back in the Sixties. As in many things, a quote from Oscar Wilde can be applied here: "Anything worth doing is worth doing to excess."

A TALK WITH CHRIS CLAREMONT

X-MEN FILE

As a writer, Chris Claremont has bested Stan Lee's record on **The Fantastic Four** for writing the most consecutive issues of a series. Chris has written the new X-Men since their first regular appearance in **X-Men** 94 and has managed to keep two jumps ahead of the readers ever since. When Storm lost her powers, fans figured that it was just a matter of time before she got them back—but it hasn't happened yet. The adventures in the **X-Men** have managed to be wilder and more far-reaching than in any other Marvel title. Even the Secret Wars seemed commonplace next to such X-Men tales as "Days of Future Past" in which a glimpse of the future was revealed where Sentinels ruled the world and super heroes were hunted down, imprisoned and exterminated. In another saga, a magic spell swept over Manhattan and transformed every living thing there into a weird, savage parallel version. Future plans for the team will be even more dramatic.

INTERVIEW

This was Marvel's first mutant title and it remains the hub around which the others revolve. This title also tends to set the pace for the approach taken in the other books, particularly since Chris Claremont writes both **The X-Men** and **The New Mutants.** It is for this reason that the status of the X-Men as they relate to the rest of humanity has remained consistent.

"The X-Men are very much a secret team. That's one of their key elements," states Claremont. "They do all of their work in the gray shadows on the fringe of society. They're unsung heroes, more outlaw than not, in the tradition of pulp fiction."

But this consistency does not mean that the book hasn't gone through growth and change over the past decade of its existence as the new X-Men.

"They're much better written now," Claremont asserts. "You can look at the book the way it was written then, the way the characters were written then, and hopefully see some fundamental changes. Certainly in Wolverine and Storm. Kitty Pryde has changed since we introduced her. Nightcrawler has changed somewhat. Magneto has changed about as much as you can change. My hope is that if you pick up **The X-Men** in ten years, and I assume that I'm still writing it, that there's a fair chance you wouldn't even see the same characters any more, and those characters who were still existing from now would have changed even more. They would have grown as people grow over the course of their lives.

"I think that's the critical element in any long-running narrative structure," Claremont continues. "There has to be an evolution because if they stay the same then what's the point? Some people might find that sameness comforting, but I find it dull. So I'm all for growth, change and evolution." As an example, Claremont cites Spider-Man, one of Marvel's longest running characters. "I don't want Spider-Man to be the same today as he was twenty-five years ago. I think that would be a mistake. That would mean that all he's been through in those hundreds of stories meant nothing to him—they had no effect on him. So it has nothing to do with the passage of chronological time as it has to do with experience, I can't go through the things these characters go through regularly and not have thousands of emotional and psychological resonances.

"The problem with DC for so long," Claremont observes, "was that their characters never changed. Superman emerged unscathed emotionally from every encounter and every conflict, and yet the wealth of all the possible psychological depths that you could go through was extraordinary. He was the sole survivor of his race, a god-like being stuck on a planet of physical and mental inferiors. He could rule this world! Yet he chooses to be a defender. Why? He chooses to deliberately downplay his appearance and power so as to blend in to our society. Why? What are we to him? Pets? Does he wish he was like us? The more you sit there and think about who Superman is and why he is and where he comes from, the more fascinating it is. As a writer, I wish people would explore it."

A massive change recently reflected in both **The X-Men** and **The New Mutants** was when Magneto, the original X-Men's oldest foe, reformed and took over the position formerly occupied by Professor X (who is now off in space with the Star Jammers).

"Times change," says Claremont, repeating his previously stated theme. "In our own world 35 years ago, Menachim Begin was a terrorist in the eyes of the officials of the British Government. Now, before he retired, he was the Prime Minister of Israel—respected in the Western world. Ten years ago the Vietnamese were our bitter enemies. Who knows what they'll be ten years from now. Anything is possible.

What Claremont does not see as possible is the return of Prof. X to the **X-Men**. "Not if I can help it," the writer stresses. "That would basically defeat the purpose of having Magneto as the head of the school. At this stage he's with the StarJammers and assuming I ever find an artist, we will some day do a StarJammers mini-series."

Easily the most popular X-Man is Wolverine. While something is known of his background, much of it is shrouded in mystery, although this shroud has been lifted recently in the Bill Mantlo scripted **Alpha Flight**. But Claremont is quick to point out that just because those events are chronicled in **Alpha Flight**, that doesn't make them a hard and fast part of Wolverine's origin.

"It's not really an origin of Wolverine—it's the first meeting between Wolverine and the Hudsons. My own feeling is that, unless something is established by the omnipotent narrator (in captions rather than in dialogue), it isn't necessarily so. What you saw in those two issues, as I recall, is Heather Hudson's interpretation of scraps of data that she gathered from her husband. She has bits of a puzzle, put them together and come to a conclusion that Wolverine somehow got his bones from Deathstrike or Deathstrike's father and that Hudson was somehow involved in it. That's her interpretation. For all we know she could be wrong. Wolverine doesn't care. It happened a long

THAT CAN BE ARRANGED, BABE!
GODDESS, HE MEANS IT!
I AM LEADER OF THE X-MEN, WHILE THAT IS SO, YOU WILL USE YOUR CLAWS WHEN I COMMAND NO OTHER TIME.
I WOULDN'T TAKE THAT FROM CYCLOPS!
YOU WILL TAKE IT FROM ME. YOU POSSESS SPEED, STRENGTH -- YOUR UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM SKELETON MAKES YOU NEARLY INVULNERABLE. YOU SHOULD NOT NEED YOUR CLAWS--
--EXCEPT IN THE MOST EXTREME OF SITUATIONS, AGAINST THE DEADLIEST AND MOST POWERFUL OF FOES.
ALL RIGHT, STORM. I'LL DO IT YER WAY-- FER NOW.
BUT THIS CONVERSATION AIN'T FINISHED. NOT BY A LONG SHOT.
SNAKT!

time ago. But as I said, unless a fact is stated by the omnipotent narrator, it is mutable and subject to change, and sometimes even those are. While I respect what Bill has done, I don't consider myself especially bound by them. I am bound by them in the sense that that is the tale of what happened when Wolverine met the Hudsons. Those events are true. What happened before is anybody's guess. We haven't actually seen it—we've only heard people tell about it and people lie all the time."

Claremont has a very good reason as to why the origin of Wolverine has remained shrouded in mystery for all these years and why he hasn't delved into in in the pages of the **X-Men**.

"I find that Magneto and Wolverine are characters for whom I feel that the less we know about them, the better. I would like to preserve as much of an air of mystery about them as I can because as a reader, that was what I liked. I wanted to know about the characters who intrigued me but not so much that there was nothing left for me to play with in my own imagination."

"Rachel is getting to be a confused character," editor Ann Nocenti explains. "We're going to do some things to help solidify who she is and as a result some of the X-Men are going to leave the team for awhile. Plus we'll be bringing back an old member and we have a lot of big cosmic stories planned for them."

The Rachel plotline takes on a stronger tone in issue 207, titled "Ghosts." This plays off Rachel's confrontation with The Beyonder in 203 when she tapped into Wolverine's life-force against his will. The repercussions of Wolverine's smoldering resentment over this incident unfold in issue 207 with dramatic results.

But late in the summer of '86, as if to celebrate Marvel's 25th anniversary, the new X-men will become even newer when some of the team are killed(!) and replaced by such characters as Havoc, the Dazzler and Longshot. Like Claremont says, he's for change.

PROFESSOR X—CHARLES XAVIER, Ph.D.

Before there could be an X-Men, there had to be a man with a vision. That man was Charles Xavier.

The son of Brian and Sharon Xavier, Charles' father worked on the atomic bomb project and his possible exposure to atomic radiation is one explanation for Charles Xavier's powerful mutant telepathic powers.

Brian Xavier was killed in a nuclear accident following World War Two. A co-worker, Dr. Kurt Marko, took advantage of Sharon Xavier's grief and wormed his way into her confidence and her affections. He married the lovely and lonely woman sometime later. Cain Marko, Curt's son of a former marriage, came to live with them soon after and bullied the young and diminutive Charles. Cain was jealous of Charles' scholastic and other successes.

Cain was disliked not only by Charles but by his mother as well. She finally came to realize that Kurt Marko had married her only to take advantage of her position and wealth. Unable to cope, she died of a broken heart.

Then one night, Cain and Kurt became embroiled in an argument and Cain spilled chemicals that accidentally caused a fire. Kurt Marko rescued the two boys but died in the process.

Charles went on to finish both high school and college before being drafted and sent to Korea. There he encountered his step-brother and watched Cain become trapped in a cave-in. This was right after Cain discovered the hidden gem which bestowed upon the holder the powers of the Crimson Bands of Cyttorak. Shelling buried Marko under

many tons of rock and rubble. It took him ten years just to dig free. Then he went in search of Xavier, bent on killing him. By that time Charles Xavier had organized the X-Men. Together they managed to defeat Cain—now called the Juggernaut—through the use of a mind blast.

In his youth, Charles was involved with Moira MacTaggert. At one point, they were engaged, but for unknown reasons she broke off the relationship and returned to her home in Scotland. It would be many years before Charles would see her again.

In his grief over the broken engagement, Charles wandered the Mediterranean until he came to the island of Kirinos, and then to Cairo, Egypt. There he encountered his first evil mutant, Amahl Farouk. A telepath as powerful as Xavier himself, they had a psi war which resulted in Farouk's death. Xavier recalls the crucial incident, his first combat with an evil mutant, in the following words, "I was in his mind when he died. It was like a guided tour of Hell. Amahl Farouk was the first evil mutant I'd ever met, the first who made me realize how truly deadly mutant powers could be in the wrong hands."

From Cairo Xavier journeyed to Tibet where he encountered an alien being called Lucifer. The alien kept the populace of a walled city enslaved. In trying to free them, Xavier was captured by Lucifer and crippled by a huge stone slab which pinned his legs. It would be many years later when Xavier would once again walk, through the efforts of yet another alien being.

CYCLOPS

(Scott Summers)

When introduced in **X-Men** 1, Scott Summers was nicknamed "Slim," although that name quickly vanished.

Scott, and his brother, Alex, grew up in an orphanage, believing that their parents had died years before. As adults they learned that they had been suffering from amnesia over a traumatic childhood incident which led them to believe that their parents had died. The son of Christopher Summers, an Air Force test pilot, and his wife, Katherine Anne, the entire family were passengers in their father's private plane when it encountered an alien spacecraft of the Shi'ar Empire. The wooden vintage plane was accidentally set ablaze and the boys' mother pushed them out with the only undamaged parachute. Burdened by two people, the parachute slowed their descent enough to spare their lives but not enough to spare them injury. In a comatose state for a year, Scott suffered brain damage which affected that portion of his brain which would have controlled his mutant power when it emerged in adulthood.

Cyclop's power is that he emits powerful optic blasts of shattering force from his eyes. He can only control this by means of wearing a pair of ruby quartz glasses when he is out of costume, by shutting his eyes (but this has obvious drawbacks) and by wearing the special visor on his costume which mechanically controls his force beam emissions via ruby quartz plates.

Scott's power emerged when he was a teenager and was preceded by severe headaches. A Washington, DC optometrist found that ruby quartz glasses solved Scott's vision problems but he suspected that the boy might be a mutant even though the power itself had not yet manifested itself. The eye doctor reported his suspicions to the FBI, but this later worked to Scott's benefit.

Summers was on the street of a major metropolis when his power suddenly manifested itself and burst forth, destroying a crane and causing its load to plummet towards a crowd of people. Scott was able to destroy the debris and save the crowd but the onlookers were frightened by the incident and pursued him. Scott escaped from the city aboard a departing freight train.

Professor X heard of the incident and correctly suspected that it indicated a mutant presence. Consulting FBI agent Fred Duncan (whom he had previously convinced to aid him in his behind-the-scenes efforts to have mutants and humans live together peaceably) he learned of the optometrist report and began to search for Scott.

Alone and afraid, the young Summers had fallen under the influence of an evil mutant, Jack Winters (Jack O'Diamonds and later the Living Diamond). Prof. X tracked Scott down and freed him from Winters. Scott became the first student at the Professor's prestigious school for gifted youngsters. Later Jean Grey and other students were added and were drilled in the use of their unique gifts. The professor appointed Summers as the team's first leader.

Scott fell in love with Jean Grey with their first meeting, but it took him a long time to work up the courage to tell her of his feelings. He discovered that she felt the same way about him. Their relationship continued even into the new X-Men.

The New X-Men were formed when most of the original team disappeared while investigating a mutant on a Pacific atoll. Through Cerebro, the Professor's computer scanner,

new mutants were located, as well as some they had dealt with in the past such as Sunfire, Banshee as well as Wolverine who had first been encountered by the Hulk. On the island they find the other X-Men whose mutant energies were being fed off by the island's colony intelligence. Upon defeating it, the now 13 members of the X-Men return to New York where they split up with only Cyclops and Marvel Girl (Jean Grey) remaining with the new team of Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Storm, Colossus, Banshee and Thunderbird.

In **X-Men** 129, Scott's amorphous relationship with Jean Grey reaches a turning point when they are reunited after a prolonged period of each believing the other dead. Scott, introspective as always, has faced his conflicting feelings and come to a decision. In explaining his attitude before and how it was changed when he'd believed her dead he says, "All my life, it seemed that—every time I turned around—I was losing people I loved:my folks, my brother Alex, the few friends I made at the orphanage. Each time the loss hurt. Losing you was the loss I couldn't take. If I'd allowed myself to feel...anything, the grief would have broken me. When I'd thought you'd died...I...it was like my mind shut part of itself off. I felt...nothing. Jean, you're everything to me—as necessary as the air I breathe. I used to say 'I love you' without truly knowing what I was talking about. I know now—a little, anyway."

Scott's relationship with Jean deepens but her powers had been subtly changing her, distorting her personality until as Dark Phoenix she committed planetary crimes. In **X-Men** 137. during an interlude when the Dark Phoenix portion of her personality is not in control, she commits suicide using a powerful alien weapon on the Moon.

Cyclops left the X-Men at this point in order to sort out his feelings of grief but he would invariably be pulled into situations with them, such as when Magneto attempted to blackmail the world in **X-Men** 150. He thereafter returned to the group.

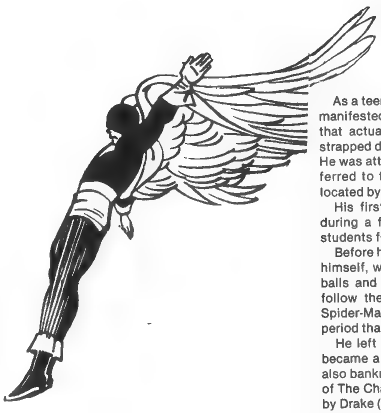
When Scott met Madelyne Pryor, the sole survivor of the plane crash, he wondered for a time if she could possibly be Phoenix/Jean Grey. Until he sorted out whether he loved her for herself or because of who she might be, due to her startling resemblance to Jean, he had a difficult time handling the relationship. When he did work it out, they were married in **X-Men** 175. Right before the wedding, Scott visited Jean's grave to say goodbye to her once and for all. "What we had was magic—I'll treasure it always. Now, Madelyne and I have a chance to create our own magic, to make what is as unique and special as what was. I hope you understand. Goodbye Jean. Farewell...my heart."

In "Duel" (**X-Men** 201), Storm (now bereft of her powers) and Cyclops have a battle of skill and wits to see who should lead the team. Cyclops loses and leaves the team. But he already had mixed feelings about staying because Magneto was now running things.

He returns to his wife and all is well until he receives a fateful phone call telling him that Jean Grey is not only alive, but it was never her who was Dark Phoenix. Without telling his wife the truth, Cyclops leaves and joins his former team mates from the original X-Men which have formed into a group calling themselves X-Factor. But Scott is now in a triangle with his wife on one side and his love lost on the other.

THE ANGEL

(Warren Worthington III)



As a teenager, Warren K. Worthington III's mutant ability manifested itself when he grew a set of powerful wings that actually enabled him to fly. By keeping the wings strapped down, he was able to hide them under his clothes. He was attending a military academy at the time and transferred to the School for Gifted Youngsters after being located by Prof. X.

His first heroic exploit occurred at the military when, during a fire, he disguised himself and rescued several students from a burning building.

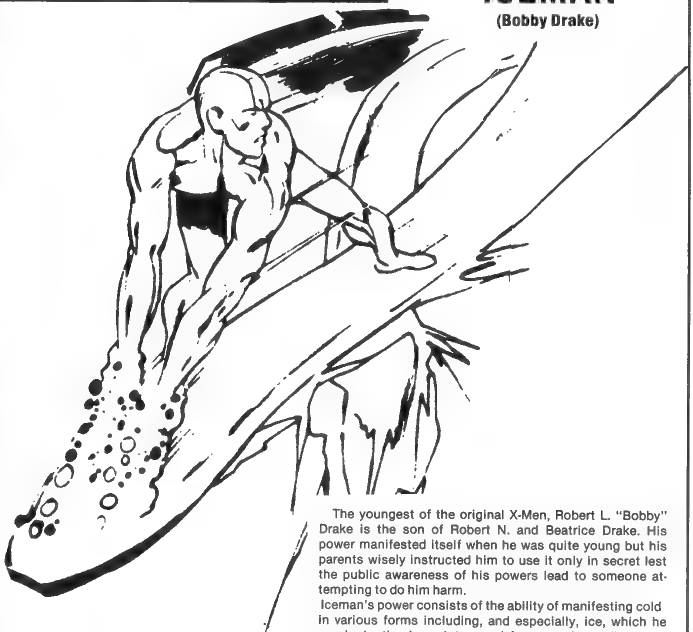
Before his days in the X-Men, he fashioned a costume for himself, worked up a pistol that fired gas filled ping pong balls and dubbed himself the Avenging Angel, trying to follow the paths recently blazed by such characters as Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four. It was during this period that he was located by the X-Men.

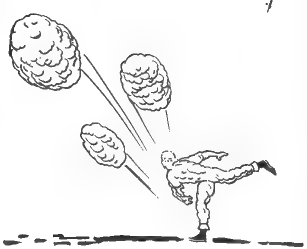
He left the X-Men when the new band was formed and became a founding member of The Champions, which he also bankrolled with an inheritance. Following the breakup of The Champions, he had adventures with his friend Bobby Drake (Iceman) and then returned to the new X-Men. But this association lasted only about a year and Angel left due to a personality conflict with Wolverine.

Angel is presently a founding member of X-Factor, which he is also the benefactor for. He helped form this organization due to his suspicion of the X-Men because it was being led by Magneto, an old foe.

ICEMAN

(Bobby Drake)





The youngest of the original X-Men, Robert L. "Bobby" Drake is the son of Robert N. and Beatrice Drake. His power manifested itself when he was quite young but his parents wisely instructed him to use it only in secret lest the public awareness of his powers lead to someone attempting to do him harm.

Iceman's power consists of the ability of manifesting cold in various forms including, and especially, ice, which he can instantly shape into usual forms such as slides and tunnels for rescues and escapes.

Drake joined the X-Men when he unwisely used the power against hoods who tried to mug him and his girlfriend. It terrified her and she fled from him. News spread and a mob gathered outside his home and dragged him off to jail. When Cyclops attempted to free him, Bobby refused, thinking that it would make it harder for him. The mob saw them and attacked and Prof. X had to rescue them by mentally erasing all knowledge of the circumstances from the minds of the people in the mob.

Upon leaving the X-Men, he attended school for a time, was a member of the short-lived group The Champions and then hung around with The Angel, sharing several adventures, including one with the Hulk where they battled a master mold Sentinel in an orbiting space station.

Presently he is a member of the newly formed group X-Factor. Following the original dream of Prof. X to find, rescue and train mutants, they operate as a front group claiming to deal with mutant problems.

THE BEAST
(Hank McCoy)

The son of Norton and Edna Andrews McCoy, Henry P. "Hank" McCoy was born with his powers. These consist of superhuman agility and more than normal strength. His prehensil feet enable him to climb otherwise difficult surfaces.

Not understanding that he was a superhuman, Hank McCoy never hid his abilities and in fact excelled as an athlete, particularly in football. He was a showoff even in his youth.

When a criminal calling himself El Conquistador learned of this remarkable athlete, he kidnapped McCoy's parents in order to force him to aid in his criminal schemes. But the X-Men tracked him down and rescued Hank and his parents. Prof. X then supposedly used his mental powers to wipe the memory of the superstar athlete Hank McCoy from the memories of everyone in the state. I wonder what he did about past newspaper coverage?

After leaving the X-Men, he went to work for the Brand Corporation where he developed the hormonal extract which was the base chemical cause of mutation. Upon drinking it, he was transformed into an ape-like creature, a form in which he remained for several years until after joining the X-Factor. He was kidnapped and a scientific experiment to find the nature of mutation caused him to revert to human form.

JEAN GREY

The daughter of John and Elaine Grey, her mutant power of telekenesis first manifested when Jean was eleven. Her playmate, Annie Richardson, chased a Frisbee into the street and was struck by a car. At the instant Annie died, Jean's mind entered that of her playmate and the experience was so traumatic that Jean became totally withdrawn. After visiting several experts unsuccessfully, Jean's parents took her to Charles Xavier, who mentally cured her while at the same time placing psychic blocks against her being able to use her mental powers before she was old enough to deal with them maturely.

Xavier worked with her over the next several years and finally invited her to join his school for gifted youngsters, which she arrived at as the last member to join the original team.

She fell in love with Scott Summers (Cyclops) almost from their first meeting, but was too shy to make the first move. Scott felt the same about her but neither expressed themselves openly until Bobby Drake's 18th birthday party. Their relationship grew from there.

She and Scott were the only original X-Men to remain when the new group was formed, although she had left briefly.

In a battle with the Sentinels in space, she mentally held together their spacecraft upon Earth re-entry. When it crashed, she appeared to die but actually entered a comatose state inside a strange cocoon where she slumbered for years while her mutant powers slowly healed themselves.

Meanwhile, a being named Phoenix took her form, and her place in Scott's life. When Phoenix became unstable and murderous, she committed suicide.

Years later, the Fantastic Four found Jean Grey and the other original X-Men were notified, including a shocked (and now married) Scott Summers. Jean is presently a member of X-Factor.

WOLVERINE
(Logan...)

Known only as Logan, his mutant powers consist of heightened senses such as smell and hearing. He grew up in western Canada but apparently spent part of his youth in Japan as he is fluent in that nation's language and customs.

In the early Sixties he was befriended by James MacDonald Hudson and his wife, Heather. Logan had recently suffered a bout of mental illness but his new friends taught him to control his murderous berserker rages. Logan later joined the Canadian armed forces as a soldier, and later a secret agent. When James Hudson came off with the idea of creating a corps of super agents, Logan was enlisted to undergo treatments which would make him superhuman. His entire skeleton was replaced (some insist merely plated) with one made of nearly indestructable admantium, and also given a set of retractable admantium claws. He became the first of Hudson's homegrown superheroes.

His first mission was to deal with the Hulk, who had wandered into Canada and was creating havok. Due to the simultaneous appearance of the Wendigo, this was hampered, although it is doubtful that the tireless Hulk could have been defeated by the still human Wolverine.

Logan started becoming disencnanted with his newfound position when his superiors didn't accept his explanation for why he didn't bring in the Hulk. When Prof. X offered Logan the chance to join the reforming X-Men, he immediately quit the Canadian Armed Forces, much to his former employer's displeasure.

As Weapon Alpha, James Hudson attempted unsuccessfully to kidnap Wolverine, but Wolverine is not the type to be so compelled. Even when the entire team of Alpha Flight attempted to persuade him of the error of his ways, Wolverine was not so easily compelled.

As a member of the new X-Men, Wolverine has often aroused conflict within the team itself over his often violent reactions to situations, and in fact has defied the anti-killing vow of the rest of the team.

STORM

(Ororo Munroe)

Ororo was born in Harlem to photojournalist David Munro and N'Dare, a tribal princess. They moved to Cairo shortly thereafter where her parents were killed when a plane crashed into their house during the 1956 Suez War.

Orphaned, Ororo found herself cast out on the streets of Cairo at age five. Taken in by one Achmed El Gibar, a man who ran a band of street thieves, he taught her to be an expert lockpick and pick pocket.

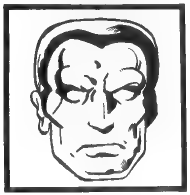
At age 12 she left the band and began wandering south to Kenya, the ancestral home of her mother. As the daughter of a witch-priestess, Ororo inherited the potential to possess great powers. When those powers to control weather emerged, she used them to help local tribes and they in turn regarded her as a goddess. But she was benevolent in this role, not arrogant or selfish. It was her desire to use her powers for the betterment of others that allowed Prof. X to convince her to join the new X-Men.

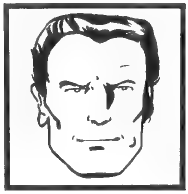
Prof. X gave her the name Storm and she rose to leader of the X-Men when Cyclops left the group following the death of Dark Phoenix.

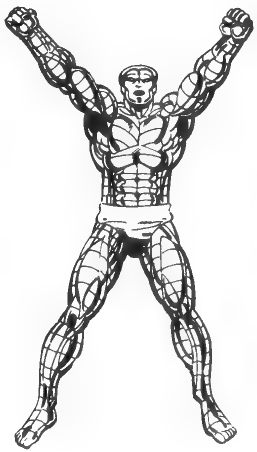
A group attempting to hunt down Rogue (formerly a member of the second Brotherhood of Evil Mutants) with an anti-mutant weapon, Rogue was accidentally shot instead and robbed of her powers. She has remained with the X-Men regardless and her skills actually managed to defeat Cyclops in a duel over who would be the leader of the group.

Storm is also the titular leader of a large outcast group of mutants who live beneath the streets of New York and call themselves the Morlocks. This happened when she defeated the previous Morlock leader in battle.

COLOSSUS
(Peter Rasputin)







When Prof. X was forming the new X-Men, he travelled to the U.S.S.R. and there recruited Piotr Rasputin. His power consists of being able to mentally will his entire body to transform into an organic metal whose true composition is unknown.

When asked by Prof. X to travel with him to America, Peter responded, "But if I possess such power as you say— does it not belong to the state?"

"Power such as yours belongs to the world, Peter, to be used for the good of all. And believe me, your powers are needed!" was Prof. X's reply.

So Peter left the collective farm where he had been born and raised in Russia and went with Prof. X. How the Prof. was able to arrange the emigration on such short notice is unknown.

Adopting the name Colossus, Peter has become one of the most powerful members of the X-Men.

In his late teens, for a time Peter was attracted to Kitty Pryde, the youngest member of the team. If anything she was even more strongly attracted to him. But when the X-Men (minus Kitty) were whisked off to the Secret Wars by The Beyonder, Peter fell in love with a woman who died during that interlude. When he returned he found that his feelings for Kitty had changed, much to her dismay.

Wolverine didn't feel that Peter was fair when he dumped Kitty over a woman who wasn't even alive when Kitty had put her life on the line for Peter just as surely as this other woman had.

Peter's younger sister, Illyana, was kidnapped from the USSR by Arcade and after being rescued she came to live with the X-Men. When she was kidnapped to the dimension of limbo by the supernatural being Belasco, several years passed for her while only moments went by for the X-Men. When she returned, she had mutant powers and was an adolescent. She adopted the name Magik.

The strength of Peter's metal form has been tested on occasion, sometimes rather severely in the midst of battle. While bound to a stake in the Savage Land, a fire was set around him and while his form turned red hot, he didn't feel any pain and was able to escape before he could suffer any damage.

But in a later battle with Pyro and Avalanche, Colossus's form becomes superheated, and is then drenched in liquid nitrogen. His body blisters and cracks beneath the absolute cold. He is saved when a complicated procedure is worked out where Rogue absorbs his powers, thus transferring the statue-like state he was frozen into, while a Morlock healer immediately cured his otherwise mortal wounds.

At nineteen, Peter, although powerful, is still young and inexperienced compared to some of the other X-Men, although he has learned much since journeying here from the Soviet Union.

Arcade once captured the X-Men and used the background of Colossus against him. With a robot KGB agent, Arcade brainwashed Colossus into believing that the X-Men were his enemies. They did not fare well against him and only by appealing to his sense of family involvement with the X-Men were they able to penetrate the brainwashing because Peter looks upon the group as much more than a team.

ROGUE

Former member of the second Brotherhood of Evil Mutants (with no affiliation to Magneto), Rogue has fought Rom, the Avengers, Spider-Woman, Dazzler and the X-Men Her most infamous attack though was on Ms. Marvel/Carol Danvers when Rogue used her power to absorb the memories and physical abilities of another to steal permanently the powers of Ms. Marvel. She has since learned to control her ability but only after her powers had run wild and she had to turn to Prof. X for help. In gratitude, Rogue renounced her ties with the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants and slowly won the respect and admiration of the other X-Men.

At present, the slightest touch from Rogue will transfer powers without her even willing it. Thus she wears gloves and cannot know the closeness of love and other such physical contact that a normal person can enjoy.

MAGNETO

First seen in **X-men** 1, Magneto as a mutant **homo superior** believed that mankind was incapable of properly guiding its own destiny. His beliefs were largely molded by the fact that he was a prisoner of the Nazis in World War Two along with his family and were shipped to the notorious Auschwitz death camp. He was the only member of his family to survive and when liberated by the Russians, he remained behind the Iron Curtain for some years thereafter although there is no indication that he was influenced by Communist ideologies. Rather Magneto (real name unknown) became embittered and his hatred became focused on humankind in general when, as an adult, his mutant powers manifested themselves.

He was married at the time to a woman named Magda and had fathered a daughter who died under mysterious circumstances. Blaming the nearby villagers, he took revenge using his newly realized mutant magnetic powers. But his wife was terrified of both his powers and his stated intent to use them to subjugate humanity.

His wife, Magda, fled, but unknown to him, she was pregnant. Coming upon Wundagore Mountain, the citadel of the High Evolutionary, she gave birth to twins, Wanda and Pietro, a girl and a boy who were also mutants. Magda then fled, fearing that her husband would find the children, who were then given into the care of Djano Maximoff to raise. As adults the children of Magneto would become known as Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, although they would be just as unaware of who their real father is as Magneto was that they were his children. It would be many years before he learned the truth.

He then left Eastern Europe in search of his wife, but finally gave up and stayed for a time in the newly-formed nation of Israel working with concentration camp survivors. This is where he met Professor Xavier. Friends at this time, they prevented an early version of HYDRA, led by Baron Strucker, from securing a secret cache of Nazi gold hidden near the end of the war. But Magneto had begun to realize that there were other mutants like himself and that they needed to stand against humanity. He used the Nazi gold to make himself independent from the rest of mankind and begin experimenting in the development of his magnetic powers.

Years later, Professor X, now leader of a mutant band he had organized, encountered Magneto on the psychic plane when the powerful evil mutant placed himself publicly

against mankind by attempting to take over a missile base. Defeated by the combined efforts of the X-Men and Prof. X., Magneto organized a mutant band of his own called the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants (now defunct). Using it to conquer a small South American Country, the republic of Santo Marco, it briefly served as their base of operations. The Brotherhood consisted of Magneto, the Toad, Mastermind, Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch. Magneto was unaware at this time that they were his children. They set a precedent by renouncing the band and their criminal ways a couple years later and joined the Avengers. Magneto would later battle Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch in **Avengers** 47, "Magneto Walks The Earth."

For a time, a mutant, Lorna Dane, was thought to be Magneto's daughter but this was revealed to be a hoax perpetrated by a Magneto robot (**X-Men** 50-52 & 58).

In "I, Magneto" (**X-Men** 150), the personality of Magneto was explored in more detail and his true nature was revealed as he actually debated his personal morality with them prior to confronting them in combat once again. In explaining why he feels that his plans to rule mankind are superior to the order of civilization as it exists, he states, "There are more people **starving** today than who can truly call themselves free. I offer peace and a good life...or a swift and terrible death. The choice is theirs. For myself, I am tired of seeing things as they are and asking why, of dreaming of things that never were and asking why not. I have the power to make my dreams reality. And that I shall do."

That story marks a turning point in Magneto's life when in a battle rage he almost kills Kitty Pryde, suddenly realizing what he is doing, and what he has done in the past. "I believed so much in my destiny, in my own persoanal vision, that I was prepared to pay any price. Make any sacrifice to achieve it. But I forgot the innocents who would suffer in the process. In my zeal to remake the world, I have become much like those I have always hated and despised."

Magneto explains his long hatred of humanity due to what he experienced as a child in the second World War. "I remember my own childhood—the gas chambers at **Auschwitz**, the guards joking as they herded my family to their death. As our lives were nothing to them, so **human** lives became nothing to me."

This marked the turning point in Magneto's life. When next he encountered the X-Men, in "God Loves, Man Kills" (**Marvel Graphic Novel** 5) he was on their side, although still espousing his dreams of founding a benevolent dictatorship over all mankind. "I am not your enemy, X-Men nor do I consider you mine. True, my goal has ever been the conquest of Earth—but solely to create a world where our race, homo superior, can live in peace. Look at yourselves, risking your lives for a humanity that would rather see you behind bars, or dead."

Mutant paranoia by mankind reached a peek in "The Trial of Magneto!" (**X-Men** 200). In the end Magneto was freed when he proved his change of heart, but when a seriously injured Xavier was taken by the Starjammers so that he would be healed, Magneto promised to take Xavier's place at the head of the X-Men and the New Mutants, an action which shocked the mutant teams and which was not accepted by the original X-Men, leading to the creation of X-Factor. Magneto now finds himself attempting to achieve his goals through the methods of Prof. X that he had long looked down on. His previously fiery personality now subdued, he has become the elder statesman of mutantkind.

NIGHTCRAWLER

(Kurt Wagner)

The most bizarre looking of all the mutants, Kurt was born with a fur covered body, three digits on each hand and foot, pointed ears, fangs, glowing eyes and a backwards facing toe that makes his feet prehensil, even moreso than the Beast's.

His mother died shortly after his birth and his father disappeared so that he was taken in and raised by the gypsy witch woman, Margali Szardos.

His foster family included Stefan Szardos and Jimaine Szardos and they were very close.

For a time Kurt worked in a circus as a trapeze artist, but when a new owner put him in the freak show, Kurt fled. He returned home to find that his step-brother had become a child-killer. While fighting, Stefan was accidentally killed. But the villagers believed that, because of his appearance, Kurt was responsible for the monstrous crimes, and was himself almost killed until rescued by Prof. X. Kurt then joined the new X-Men.

Kurt has the ability to teleport short distances and can even carry someone with him when necessary. When he does so there is the "bamf" sound of displaced air, but also an inexplicable smell of brimstone. Perhaps due to the fact that he was born as he is, Kurt feels no self-pity over his inhuman appearance, unlike such characters as The Thing who were transformed later in life.

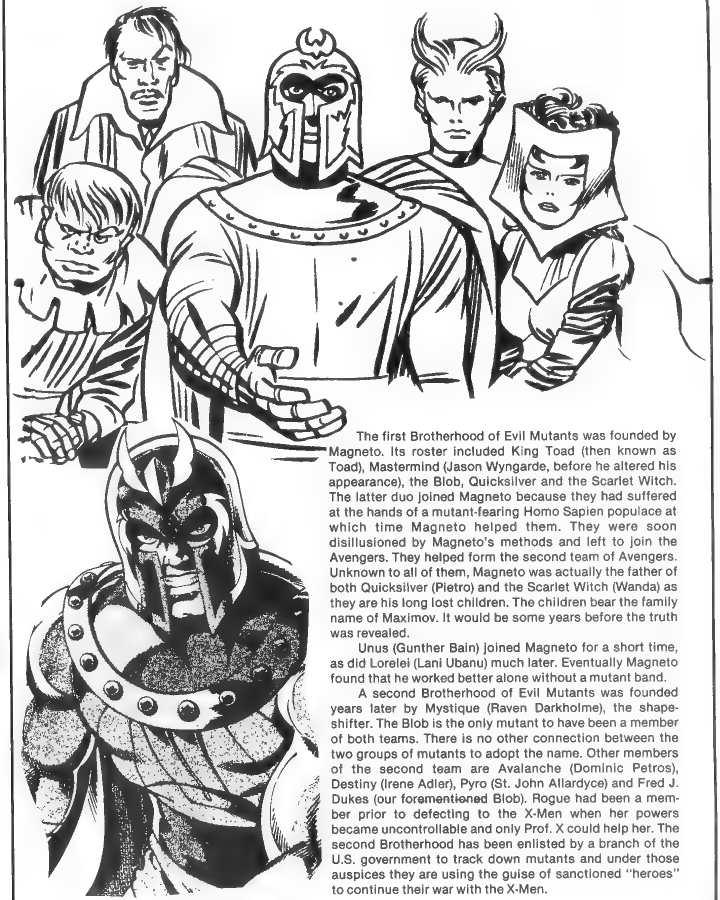
JUGGERNAUT

Cain Marko is the step-brother of Charles Xavier. Rivals since childhood, the two never truly got along. In fact it was Cain's arrogance and absence of moral values, combined with his father having married Xavier's mother to gain wealth and position, that caused the woman to die at a relatively young age.

Cain's father proved that there was still some decency in him when he saved the two boys from a fire in the house at the cost of his own life.

Cain and Charles still didn't get along after this although, ironically, they did wind up in the same platoon during the Korean War. The two stumbled on a cave which contained the secret of the Crimson Bands of Cyttorak. Grasping the gems, Cain was transformed into an unstoppable human juggernaut even as shellfire buried the cave beneath thousands of tons of rock. Prof. X barely escaped.

Years later Cain returned to seek out Xavier, now leader of the X-Men. Xavier first defeated Cain by pulling off his helmet, making the Juggernaut vulnerable to mental powers. But the Juggernaut, true to his name, has returned again and again.

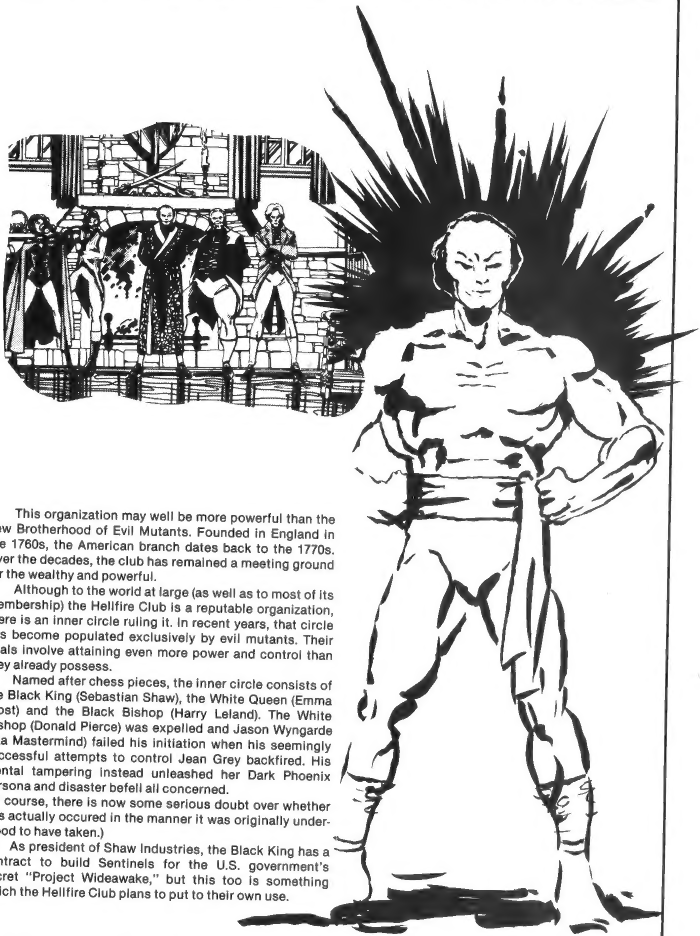


The first Brotherhood of Evil Mutants was founded by Magneto. Its roster included King Toad (then known as Toad), Mastermind (Jason Wyngarde, before he altered his appearance), the Blob, Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch. The latter duo joined Magneto because they had suffered at the hands of a mutant-fearing Homo Sapien populace at which time Magneto helped them. They were soon disillusioned by Magneto's methods and left to join the Avengers. They helped form the second team of Avengers. Unknown to all of them, Magneto was actually the father of both Quicksilver (Pietro) and the Scarlet Witch (Wanda) as they are his long lost children. The children bear the family name of Maximov. It would be some years before the truth was revealed.

Unus (Gunther Bain) joined Magneto for a short time, as did Lorelei (Lani Ubanu) much later. Eventually Magneto found that he worked better alone without a mutant band.

A second Brotherhood of Evil Mutants was founded years later by Mystique (Raven Darkholme), the shape-shifter. The Blob is the only mutant to have been a member of both teams. There is no other connection between the two groups of mutants to adopt the name. Other members of the second team are Avalanche (Dominic Petros), Destiny (Irene Adler), Pyro (St. John Allardyce) and Fred J. Dukes (our forementioned Blob). Rogue had been a member prior to defecting to the X-Men when her powers became uncontrollable and only Prof. X could help her. The second Brotherhood has been enlisted by a branch of the U.S. government to track down mutants and under those auspices they are using the guise of sanctioned "heroes" to continue their war with the X-Men.

THE HELLFIRE CLUB

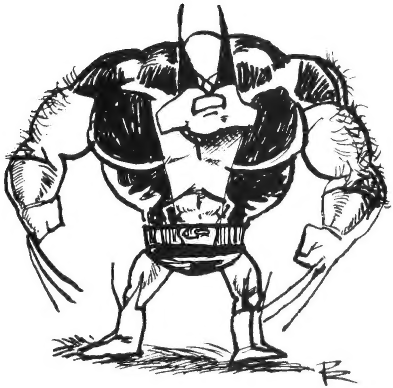


This organization may well be more powerful than the new Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. Founded in England in the 1760s, the American branch dates back to the 1770s. Over the decades, the club has remained a meeting ground for the wealthy and powerful.

Although to the world at large (as well as to most of its membership) the Hellfire Club is a reputable organization, there is an inner circle ruling it. In recent years, that circle has become populated exclusively by evil mutants. Their goals involve attaining even more power and control than they already possess.

Named after chess pieces, the inner circle consists of the Black King (Sebastian Shaw), the White Queen (Emma Frost) and the Black Bishop (Harry Leland). The White Bishop (Donald Pierce) was expelled and Jason Wyngarde (aka Mastermind) failed his initiation when his seemingly successful attempts to control Jean Grey backfired. His mental tampering instead unleashed her Dark Phoenix persona and disaster befell all concerned.
(Of course, there is now some serious doubt over whether this actually occured in the manner it was originally understood to have taken.)

As president of Shaw Industries, the Black King has a contract to build Sentinels for the U.S. government's secret "Project Wideawake," but this too is something which the Hellfire Club plans to put to their own use.



Designed and Produced
by Jim Keegan
with Production Assistance
by Ruth Kennedy.

In those halycon days of the early Sixties, the X-Men were among the least popular characters, so unpopular that in the course of time their title would suffer that ultimate degradation, the suspending of the production of new adventures, and merely rerun what had been done before. And yet, it was saved. It was almost as if, on the verge of actual cancellation, someone decided that there was a vein of precious ore buried there to be mined by the right hands later.

After a number of years of waiting, those right hands appeared—with a vengeance. And from the ashes of a fallen book arose the most popular creation of the entire comic book world! Many also consider it to be the title with the most consistent high quality of story and art ever published. In fact, this one group of characters, albeit with an altered membership, has generated an entire industry of its own, the myriad Marvel mutant books.

Today it's almost impossible to believe that on-one dark day cancellation loomed so near. Even the original team has been revived from the ashes to headline their own series.

The purpose of this volume is to chronicle that story, that fantastic adventure both of the comic book page and of the creative world. The characters are covered in loving detail, both heroes and villains and the storylines are touched upon. But, of far greater importance, the creators of the wonders are given their proper place in the history of popular culture. Lee and Kirby at the beginning; Roy Thomas carrying on the magic; resurrection under Len Wein and Dave Cockrum; the height of fantasy under the magical team of Chris Claremont and John Byrne; and the promise of future glories under the hands of Chris Claremont and John Romita, Jr.—these are the magic images that is evoked.

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